REMARKS

I. Interview Summary

Applicants wish to thank Examiner Arpad Fabian Kovacs for granting and attending the in-person interview with the undersigned at the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) on April 4, 2002. During the interview, claims 1-5 were to be withdrawn, for prosecution at a later time in divisional and/or continuation applications, as these claims were directed to a different invention.

Claims 6-13 were discussed, as was Wilcox (U.S. Patent No. 4,882,896). The Examiner also brought German Reference DE 36 18 177 A1 to the attention of the undersigned, and noted that this reference would be officially cited in the next communication from the USPTO. The Examiner suggested amendments based on claim language for the applicants to consider. A blade and stub for engagement therein, and a page from an instruction guide, were shown to the Examiner.

II. Remarks As To Office Action of January 15, 2002 and in view of the above Amendments

Introduction

Reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested. Additionally, the applicants have reviewed the Office Action of January 15, 2002, and respectfully assert that this paper is responsive to all points raised therein.

Claims 1-5 have been cancelled, as per the above-summarized interview. This cancellation of claims 1-5 is made without prejudice, and in doing so applicants reserve all rights in these claims to file divisional and/or continuation patent applications.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by Shurman, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,007,234) (Shurman) and Colens WO98/41081.

These rejections are now moot in view of the applicants canceling claims 1-5 without prejudice. In canceling claims 1-5, without prejudice, the applicants do not accept or acquiesce to these rejections. Additionally, upon filing a divisional or continuation application, the applicants will maintain the arguments distinguishing claim 1 over Shurman, from the Applicant's Amendments of June 26, 2001 and October 25, 2001.

Claims 6-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Wilcox (U.S. Patent No. 4,882,896). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection to the extent that it is applied to the claims as amended.

Claim 6, as amended, is directed to a blade assembly including a rotatable shaft in communication with a rotatable stub and a receiver of a blade. The receiver receives and retains the stub in a releasable engagement, with this engagement of the stub in the receiver creating an alignment of the shaft, stub and receiver, such that the blade is balanced upon rotation.

Wilcox (U.S. Patent No. 4,882,896) is directed to a lawnmower having a housing 12 that receives an electric motor 22, that includes a shaft 24 and a cutting element 26, formed of blades

38, as in Fig. 4 of Wilcox. The shaft 24 is permanently attached to the cutting element 26. The motor 22 can be removed from the housing 12 for charging, and is detachably secured to the housing by clamps 44, the clamps 44 attached to the housing.

Wilcox fails to show any structure of the blade that receives a stub in a releasable engagement. Rather, as cited by the Examiner, the receiver is noted as the clamps 44, on the housing 12. This housing is clearly not a part of the blades 38 or the cutting element 26. This is in contrast to the claimed invention, where the receiver is a part of the blade.

Based on the above, the claimed structure is neither shown, nor taught or suggested by Wilcox. Accordingly, claim 6 is not anticipated by Wilcox under 35 USC 102(b).

Since claim 6 is neither anticipated nor obvious in view of Wilcox, claims 7 and 8, dependent thereon, are also allowable over this cited art for the same reasons. These claims further distinguish the invention from this cited art.

Claim 9, as amended and discussed in the Applicants' Amendment of October 25, 2001, that discussion is applicable here, is directed to a blade assembly including a blade and a receiver coupled thereto. The receiver includes a receiving portion and flexible members configured for moving between outward and inward positions, with respect to the receiving portion. The flexible members also include ends that if pressured, will move the flexible members outward allowing for disengagement of the blade from the stub.

Claim 12 is directed to a lawnmower blade, formed of a blade body and a receiver. The receiver includes flexible members for retaining at least a portion of a rotatable member in a releasable engagement, with the flexible members including portions, that when pressure is

applied thereon, allow for the flexible members to move outward. This outward movement releases the blade, such that it can be removed from engagement with the rotatable member. The receiver is also configured for receiving at least a portion of a rotatable member in a substantially coaxial alignment, so that the blade is balanced upon its rotation.

As a result of both of these recited structures, the blade can be placed onto and removed from the respective stub or rotating member, absent any tools, or "tools free". This structure makes changing blades a simple and quick operation, easily performable by a single person.

Wilcox has been discussed above. That discussion is applicable here.

Wilcox is in contrast to the claimed invention, as it lacks any structure that allows the cutting element 26 to be removed from the shaft 24 "tools free". Specifically, the cutting element 26, that includes the blades 38, is permanently attached to the shaft 24, and therefore, does not retain any rotatable member in a releasable engagement. This is in contrast to the claimed invention, where the blades have receivers for releasably engaging the respective stub or rotatable member.

Based on the above, the claimed structure is not shown, nor taught or suggested by Wilcox. Accordingly, claims 9 and 12 are not anticipated by Wilcox under 35 USC 102(b).

Since claims 9 and 12 are neither anticipated nor obvious in view of Wilcox, claims 10 and 11, and 13, respectively, dependent thereon, are also allowable over this cited art for the same reasons. These claims further distinguish the invention from this cited art.

Conclusion

The Examiner's citations of U.S. Patent No. 3,973,378 (Bartasevich, et al.), U.S. Patent No. 3,212,244 (Wilgus), and U.S. Patent No. 6,321,515 (Colens), are noted to complete the record.

Should the Examiner have any question or comment as to the form, content or entry of this paper, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned counsel at the address and telephone number below. Additionally, if there are any further issues yet to be resolved to advance the prosecution of this application to issue, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned counsel.

Allowance of all pending claims, 6-13, is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Certificate of Mailing Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.8(a)

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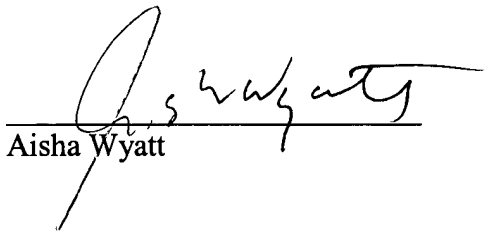

Aisha Wyatt

Date: May 15, 2002

MARKED UP VERSION OF AMENDMENTS PURSUANT TO 37 C.F.R. § 1.121

Marked Up Version of Amended Claims

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(c)(1)(ii)

Claims 6, 9 and 12 have been amended as follows:

6. (Three Times Amended). A lawnmower blade assembly comprising:

a shaft in rotatable communication with a motor;[,]

a stub [said shaft] in communication with [a stub] said shaft;

a blade, said blade including [;] a receiver, said receiver [coupled to said blade and] including members for receiving said stub and retaining said stub in said receiver in a releasable engagement; and

said shaft, stub, [blade] and receiver are configured to be in coaxial alignment, such that said blade is balanced upon rotation.

9. (Three Times Amended). A lawnmower blade assembly comprising:

a shaft in rotatable communication with a motor;

a stub in communication with said shaft;

a blade; and

a receiver coupled to said blade, said receiver including a receiving portion and at least a plurality of flexible members configured for moving between outward and inward positions for engaging and retaining said stub in said receiving portion in a releasable engagement, said flexible members including ends [and] configured such that pressure [on said ends] thereon moves said flexible members outward, allowing for at least the disengagement of said blade from said stub.

12. (Once Amended). A lawnmower blade comprising:

a blade body, said blade body including oppositely disposed cutting portions and a platform intermediate said oppositely disposed cutting portions; and

a receiver, said receiver coupled to said platform in a substantially coaxial alignment, said receiver including flexible members for moving between outward and inward positions for receiving and retaining at least a portion of a rotatable member in communication with a motor in a releasable engagement, said flexible members including portions configured such that pressure thereon moves said flexible members outward, said receiver configured [to receive and retain said] for receiving and retaining at least a portion of the rotatable member in a substantially coaxial alignment therewith, such that said lawnmower blade is balanced upon rotation.

Clean Version of Pending Claims

6. A lawnmower blade assembly comprising:

a shaft in rotatable communication with a motor;

a stub in communication with said shaft;

a blade, said blade including a receiver, said receiver including members for receiving said stub and retaining said stub in said receiver in a releasable engagement; and

said shaft, stub, and receiver are configured to be in coaxial alignment, such that said blade is balanced upon rotation.

7. The blade assembly of claim 6, wherein said stub includes an outer surface and said receiver includes an inner surface, said outer and said inner surfaces correspondingly configured with respect to each other for allowing a sufficient but minimal amount of rotational play for said blade.

8. The blade assembly of claim 6, wherein said members include flexible bodies for spring-like behavior, said bodies terminating in outwardly extending platforms, said members being operable when pressure is applied to said outwardly extending platforms.

9. A lawnmower blade assembly comprising:

a shaft in rotatable communication with a motor;

a stub in communication with said shaft;

a blade; and

a receiver coupled to said blade, said receiver including a receiving portion and at least a plurality of flexible members configured for moving between outward and inward positions for engaging and retaining said stub in said receiving portion in a releasable engagement, said flexible members including ends configured such that pressure thereon moves said

flexible members outward, allowing for at least the disengagement of said blade from said stub.

10. The blade assembly of claim 9, wherein said shaft, stub, blade and receiver are configured to be in coaxial alignment, such that said blade is balanced upon rotation.

11. The blade assembly of claim 10, wherein said stub includes an outer surface and said receiving portion includes an inner surface, said outer and said inner surfaces correspondingly configured with respect to each other for allowing a sufficient but minimal amount of rotational play for said blade.

12. A lawnmower blade comprising:

a blade body, said blade body including oppositely disposed cutting portions and a platform intermediate said oppositely disposed cutting portions; and

a receiver, said receiver coupled to said platform in a substantially coaxial alignment, said receiver including flexible members for moving between outward and inward positions for receiving and retaining at least a portion of a rotatable member in communication with a motor in a releasable engagement, said flexible members including portions configured such that pressure thereon moves said flexible members outward, said receiver configured for receiving and retaining at least a portion of the rotatable member in a substantially coaxial alignment therewith, such that said lawnmower blade is balanced upon rotation.

13. The lawnmower blade of claim 12, wherein said flexible members include bodies configured for spring-like behavior.

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